United Nations A/52/1009

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 August 1998

Original: English

Fifty-second session
Agenda item 116
Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999

Development Account

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 52/235 of 26 June 1998. It addresses the issues of sustainability of the Development Account, the modalities of its implementation and the specific purposes and associated performance criteria for the use of the Account. The report provides information on the types and areas of productivity improvement initiatives that can release resources for transfer to the Development Account, and proposes steps for making those transfers. It also addresses the impact that improved productivity could have on staffing levels and requirements, and on the delivery of mandated programmes and activities. It contains proposals for the procedures to approve projects for the present and future bienniums.

98-23394 (E) 180898

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–2	3
II.	Concept of the Development Account	3–5	3
III.	Sustainability	6	3
IV.	Modalities for identifying gains and transferring funds	7–15	3
	A. Types and areas of efficiency measures	7–11	3
	B. Impact on staffing levels and delivery of mandated programmes and activities	12–15	5
V.	Modalities of expenditure from the Development Account	16–20	5
VI.	Specific purposes and associated performance criteria for the use of resources	21–23	6
	A. Purposes and performance criteria	21–22	6
	B. Programme objectives and direction of the Development Account	23	6
VII.	Conclusions	24	6
Annexes			
I.	Major types of efficiency measures		7
II.	Areas for possible utilization of the Development Account		14

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in response to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 52/235 of 26 June 1998, in which the General Assembly requested, *inter alia*, that the report include the following elements:

(a) Identification of the types and areas of efficiency measures to be implemented throughout the Secretariat and estimates of the amounts and percentages of the possible savings to be achieved;

(b) Analysis of the impact of such efficiency measures on the staffing levels of the Organization and on the delivery of mandated programmes and activities;

(c) Sustainability of the Development Account and its activities beyond the year 2003;

(d) Specific proposals on the programmatic objectives and direction of the Development Account, in accordance with the priorities set out in the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001 (A/51/6/Rev.1), taking into consideration the complementarity of the activities of the Development Account with other relevant sections of the programme budget.

2. During consideration by the General Assembly of the report of the Secretary-General on the reduction and refocusing of non-programme costs (A/52/758), his note on the utilization of the Development Account (A/52/848), and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions thereon (A/52/894), a number of comments were made by Member States on the procedures for building up the Development Account, the determination of programme and project priorities and on the procedures for administering and implementing the account in section 34 of the programme budget. The present report provides additional clarification to assist the General Assembly in its further consideration of the matter.

II. Concept of the Development Account

3. The Organization continuously strives to achieve efficiency gains. In the past, such gains have contributed mainly to budget containment and to meeting additional costs relating to new mandates and activities decided by Member States. That process is ongoing.

4. At this time, however, the Secretary-General believes that there is an opportunity and a challenge to simplify greatly administrative processes of the Organization and to adopt technological improvements that will free up resources to enhance programme delivery. In proposing the creation of the Development Account, to which such resources would be redeployed, the Secretary-General's basic premise was that gains achieved as a result of productivity improvements, such as streamlining and simplification of processes and procedures would become a permanent part of the Account. The Secretary-General's intention is to make the United Nations more productive, and at the same time strengthen the activities in the economic and social sector, without any impact on the overall level of budgetary resources.

5. **The Secretary-General recommends that, in their determination of the use of the resources redeployed to the Development Account, Member States may wish to consider that the funding of development projects and activities in the economic and social sectors could include research and analysis, technical cooperation, advisory services, intergovernmental and regional cooperation, and/or other substantive activities that the Member States may wish to determine.**

III. Sustainability

6. As noted in paragraph 4 above, one of the basic premises of the Secretary-General's proposal to create the Development Account was that it should be sustainable. In becoming a permanent part of the programme budget of the United Nations, the Development Account would be sustained in accordance with current budgetary practices, whereby the level of appropriation that remains in certain budget sections after the first performance report would provide the base for that section for the subsequent proposed programme budget. The cumulative amounts transferred to the Development Account for each biennium would form the maintenance base for an appropriation under the Development Account in subsequent bienniums. This process would thus continue in each subsequent biennium, until Member States determine the ultimate level of the Development Account.

IV. Modalities for identifying gains and transferring funds

A. Types and areas of efficiency measures

7. In response to the Secretary-General's request, programme managers throughout the Secretariat, including the regional commissions, are developing initiatives to

improve productivity and enhance the quality of programme performance. In keeping with the strategies outlined by the Secretary-General in his reform report (A/51/950), the six major types of efficiency measures being pursued are:

(a) To simplify processes, procedures, rules and services, including eliminating the duplication of effort within a department and/or between departments, and discontinuing functions that are no longer required;

(b) To enhance flexibility and responsibility of line managers by delegating more authority and responsibility to programme managers in the area of managing human and financial resources and eliminating the redundancy that now exists;

(c) To expand and strengthen common services, to ensure that support services are cost-effective, of high quality, timely, provided on a competitive basis and result in full user satisfaction;

(d) To create an electronic United Nations and utilize fully information and automation systems, using modern information technology, particularly the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), to replace redundant processing techniques, thereby reducing the use of hard copy and modernizing departmental and secretarial functions;

(e) To establish further equitable reimbursement for services rendered to extrabudgetary activities and cost recovery, with a view to ensuring full cost recovery for services provided to other agencies, extrabudgetary activities and other similar sources;

(f) To enhance conference services support for meetings and documentation, using new technology and improved work methods.

8. Annex I to the present document provides information on the types and areas of efficiency measures to be implemented throughout the Secretariat. Every programme manager will be asked to reassess work flows in order to concentrate on essential inputs required to implement mandated activities in an effective and efficient manner. This process of re-engineering provides a unique opportunity to increase the output of each staff member. The detailed identification of initiatives to improve productivity requires a thorough review of activities by programme managers and their staff, including ensuring that as many ideas as possible are captured, and that staff participate fully in the reform process. To ensure completeness of the initiatives to improve productivity, programme managers will also take into account reports of other oversight bodies, such as those of the Board of Auditors, Joint Inspection Unit and the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The areas shown in annex I are illustrative and are not intended to be exhaustive.

9. In presenting his budget for the biennium 2000-2001, the Secretary-General's goal had been to redeploy resources to development activities and to commence the augmented development activities upon approval of the budget. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has pointed out the desirability of confirming the amounts of redeployable resources before they are expended. The Secretary-General recognizes this approach and, in the context of the programme budget proposals for the biennium 2000–2001, intends to submit proposals for productivity gains. Once gains have been achieved, they will be verified to ensure they do not impact on programme delivery. The Secretary-General will then include them in performance reports, and seek approval for redeployment of resources to the Development Account.

10. As part of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, information relating to initiatives to improve productivity and expand development resources will be included in budget sections. The amounts for projected savings will, by definition, be estimates and will not become final until the completion and verification of the productivity exercise(s), as recommended by the Advisory Committee. The Secretary-General will use these estimates as management targets to attain productivity gains. Such amounts will be retained in the budget section until the gains are approved for transfer by the General Assembly, and will be available for expending within the budget section if the productivity gain does not materialize. It should be emphasized that the total level of the programme budget, as approved by the General Assembly, will not change as a result of this exercise. Savings from productivity gains which are achieved during budget implementation and reported in performance reports will be utilized to fund the development projects and activities and not to reduce the level of the budget.

11. On the basis of an initial review, it is estimated that, for the biennium 2000–2001, approximately $40 million in productivity improvements could be targeted for redeployment. It should be mentioned that this estimate can be confirmed only after the detailed process described above has been completed.

B. Impact on staffing levels and delivery of mandated programmes and activities

12. The Secretary-General does not see this exercise as one of budget reduction, but rather as one of redeployment of resources, including staff, within and between the various sections of the programme budget. The Secretary-General believes that the productivity improvement exercise will not simply maintain programme delivery, but will also have a positive impact on mandated programmes and activities, with programmes being executed more effectively.

13. Efficiency measures and productivity gains generally result from improved working methods which lead to reduced resources, including human resources in areas where such gains are achieved. Thus, even when these resources are redeployed to the Development Account, there is likely to be an impact on the staffing situation of those departments where savings are intended to be achieved. Throughout this exercise it is intended that resources, including staff, be redeployed to the economic and social sector through the medium of the Development Account.

14. The intention is to give priority to the maximum extent possible to the affected staff for redeployment to activities and projects. The Secretary-General has no intention of involuntarily separating staff as a result of the redeployment of resources. It is expected that a somewhat different mix of qualifications will be needed in staff members' new assignments, as compared to those in the department they will be coming from. Therefore, it will be necessary to invest in retraining a number of staff members to enable them to take on new functions and responsibilities. This ties in with the Secretary-General's declared intention in his reform programme to place an emphasis on staff training, mobility and versatility.

15. While it is difficult at this stage to forecast their exact impact on staffing levels, it is expected that reductions in staffing requirements in those departments where savings are to be achieved could be met through a combination of redeployment and natural attrition, including retirement. As soon as a specific efficiency initiative is identified in a given department, it will be for the manager concerned to assess its impact in staffing terms and to communicate those in a timely manner to the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, so that adequate and coordinated planning in terms of posts and staff between those two offices and the departments concerned can take place, thus avoiding involuntary separation of staff. It is intended that, wherever possible, information be provided regarding the likely impact on staffing of initiatives to improve productivity within the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001. Precise information will be provided in performance reports that contain proposals for the redeployment of productivity gains.

V. Modalities of expenditure from the Development Account

16. As stated in earlier reports of the Secretary-General (A/51/950/Add.5 and A/52/848), expenditure from the Development Account is subject to the same modalities and procedures that govern the regular budget of the United Nations. Therefore, the Secretary-General will submit in the proposed programme budgets his proposals for funding development projects and activities from the Development Account, taking into account any additional guidance the General Assembly may wish to provide. Proposals for additional projects to be funded from productivity gains subsequently approved by the General Assembly will be included in future performance reports. Thus, the proposed programme budget for 2000–2001 would contain proposals for projects and activities to be funded from the Development Account, for the $13.1 million currently appropriated and any subsequent addition the General Assembly may approve.

17. For the current biennium, after substantive review by the relevant intergovernmental bodies, such proposals are submitted for the consideration of the General Assembly and would be implemented within the framework of General Assembly decisions on these proposals.

18. Given that individual projects and activities to be funded from the Development Account could extend beyond one biennium, the Secretary-General **recommends that funds appropriated for the Development Account be treated as a multi-year project and that any balance of appropriation for the Account at the end of the biennium be carried forward to the succeeding biennium**.

19. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs will serve as programme manager in preparing proposals and activities to be funded from the Development Account. The Secretary-General's formulation of the proposals for the utilization of the Account will be undertaken within the framework of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, which will consider proposals on the basis of agreed objectives on behalf of the Secretary-General, who will submit them to the relevant intergovernmental bodies for consideration.

20. Upon the completion of a project, and in line with performance indicators built into the project design, joint evaluation will be undertaken by the entities of the Executive Committee, based on which the Secretary-General will submit an annual report to the General Assembly.

VI. Specific purposes and associated performance criteria for the use of resources

A. Purposes and performance criteria

21. Bearing in mind that the resources likely to be available from the Development Account represent a small component of the overall needs of the economic and social sector, projects and activities proposed for financing from the Development Account will be defined within the scope and priorities of the approved medium-term plan and should address major development goals of the Organization. Project formulation will be guided by the following principles:

(a) The projects should complement, not substitute, existing programme activities;

(b) The projects should generally be of regional and subregional scope;

(c) The projects should aim at realizing distinct results within the period of two bienniums;

(d) The resource requirements of the projects should be well defined and sufficient to achieve anticipated results;

(e) Project proposals should pursue low-cost implementation solutions;

(f) Projects should have a strong South-South cooperation content.

22. The use of performance criteria or indicators would help in evaluating the achievements of the projects in their progress towards attainment of expected results. Given the diverse nature of the proposals, based on the variety of priorities and objectives of the medium-term plan, no single performance indicator is likely to capture a full assessment of progress in the entire range of proposals. Under the circumstances, performance indicators will have to be project-specific, chosen selectively and directly linked to the expected results of each project. Project evaluation by the Executive Committee through the means of such performance indicators would provide a sound basis for ensuring the effective use of resources and subsequent review by the General Assembly of the impact of the proposals under section 34 of the programme budget, as well as strengthening coherence and cost-effectiveness in the economic and social areas. Detailed information on performance criteria and indicators will be included in the project proposals submitted to the General Assembly for approval.

B. Programme objectives and direction of the Development Account

23. In earlier reports of the Secretary-General (A/51/950/Add.5 and A/52/848), three broad areas where resources from the Development Account could be primarily utilized have been proposed. The proposed areas are based on priority objectives of the programmes of the approved medium-term plan. Implementation of proposals under these areas will reinforce the attainment of these programme objectives. The areas, which are explained in more detail in annex II, are:

(a) Assisting developing countries in the context of globalization and increasing interdependence;

(b) Assisting in the understanding by the international community of emerging challenges and persistent problems in global development by better analysis and better networking of experts, so as to promote an enhanced appreciation of global economic and social issues;

(c) Assisting developing countries in various aspects of the implementation of the global programmes and platforms of action, especially the follow-up to United Nations conferences.

VII. Conclusions

24. The Secretary-General believes that the creation of the Development Account provides the opportunity to increase efficiency and strengthen the social and economic activities of the Organization. The Secretary-General, therefore, requests the General Assembly to endorse the approach and the procedures outlined in the present report. The Secretary-General also requests endorsement of his recommendation contained in paragraph 5 regarding the scope of the redeployment, and approval of the recommendation stated in paragraph 18 concerning the multi-year nature of the Development Account.

Annex I

Major types of efficiency measures

I. Simplify processes, procedures, rules and services

As a basis for initiating many of the types of projects aimed at efficiency measures, Staff Regulations and Rules, Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, and other regulations and rules of the Organization will be reviewed and simplified with the goal of reducing them to the minimum. Development of guidelines for the application of the revised rules, related training, and streamlining of processes that can be improved as a result of these revisions, will be required for successful implementation of the projects. In many cases these revisions will also be prerequisites for the enhancing of flexibility and responsibility of line managers.

No.	*Areas of efficiency measures*	*Impact on mandated programmes*
1	*Streamlining of administration of staff entitlements* Streamline present cumbersome procedures relating to the administration of entitlements. The focus will be on the simplification of procedures for claiming entitlements and the processing of payments.	Substantial reduction in processing effort. Staff should also benefit through the timelier payment of their entitlements.
2	*Modernization of recruitment practices* Develop and introduce further modernization of recruitment systems, with a view to greater transparency. Delegate day-to-day management of recruitment to programme managers retaining only policy-setting and monitoring at the centre. Prepare skills inventory of staff and roster of candidates to enhance the human resources planning capability of the organization, expedite the filling of vacancies, and enable skills to be matched to the requirements of the posts.	By reducing the average time for recruitment (currently up to 460 days) to a more reasonable time, programmes will be more quickly implemented by appropriately qualified staff.
3	*Rationalization of travel management* Review travel management process, with a view to ensuring that the United Nations is in line with best practices. Emphasis will be placed on giving travellers flexibility over travel arrangements, elimination of prior approval of travel, and decentralization to programme managers accountability for such travel. This will include on-line booking facilities, automated processing of travel claims and automated travel requests, which will result in speedier booking of flights that are more in line with individual requirements and less overheads incurred in processing travel requests and travel claims. Opportunities to eliminate the need to travel by utilizing videoconferencing for such purposes as recruitment, inter-office consultations, competitive exams, meetings and conferences will be explored.	Programme delivery will be facilitated by these improvements as it will reduce lead time in making travel arrangements and ensure the optimum use of travel budgets.

No.	Areas of efficiency measures	Impact on mandated programmes
4	*Simplification and streamlining of procurement processes*	
	Review procurement procedures to ensure that the United Nations is in line with best practices and that there is effective planning of programme needs to identify common requirements and provide adequate lead time for the procurement process	Programme delivery should be enhanced through more timely delivery of goods and services as and when required for programme execution

II. Enhance flexibility and responsibility of line managers

This type of efficiency measure covers three main areas, namely, human resource management, finance and general administration. A pilot project covering all three areas has been established at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Commission's membership has recommended the continuation of this project subject to the decisions of relevant legislative organs. This pilot project is expected to serve as a basis for the future delegation of authority to the other overseas offices.

No.	Areas of efficiency measures	Impact on mandated programmes
1	*Delegation of human resource management responsibilities*	
	Delegation of authority for human resource management will allow programme mangers to take responsibility for the day-to-day administration of their staff. The role of the Office of Human Resources Management will be to focus on strategy, policy, guidance, monitoring and follow-up. Appropriate oversight and mechanisms of accountability will be established. Programme managers will be trained to discharge their delegated functions and responsibilities	There should be improved programme delivery through the ability of managers to respond quickly to staffing needs
2	*Delegation of finance responsibilities*	
	Consideration is being given to delegating greater responsibility to programme managers for the management of their budgets. Offices away from Headquarters have requested greater responsibility for such functions as redeployment of funds between different objects of expenditure, the ability to issue allotments in respect of general trust funds and the utilization of programme support costs. Care will be taken to ensure that appropriate monitoring procedures and full accountability is established before any transfer of responsibility takes place	Programme delivery should be enhanced by allowing programme managers greater flexibility to respond to their operational needs

No.	Areas of efficiency measures	Impact on mandated programmes
3	*Delegation of general administrative responsibilities*	
	Examples of initiatives in this area include: (a) delegation of authority to programme managers to dispose of certain items of low value. Currently, it takes approximately one and one half years to dispose of unwanted Programme delivery will benefit by better response to operational requirements, with reduced cost of disposal of assets, and reduced lead times for purchases. items; (b) delegation of authority to programme managers to purchase items costing under $2,500. Presently, over half of procurement activity covers low value purchases	Programme delivery will benefit by better response to operational requirements, with reduced cost of disposal of assets, and reduced lead times for purchases.

III. Expand and strengthen common services

No.	Areas of efficiency measures	Impact on mandated programmes
1	*Working group on procurement common services*	
	Work thus far has been focused on Headquarters in New York and among the procurement-oriented organizations at Copenhagen. A linkage has been established between the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services, as Executive Coordinator for Common Services, and the Inter-agency Procurement Working Group, consisting of procurement officials of the United Nations system. The working group has developed harmonized regulations to govern procurement activities, procurement rules are being developed for submission to and approval by responsible governing bodies. Organizations are combining their efforts for staff training.	Improved procurement should lead to lower priced goods and services that are available as and when needed. A harmonized regulatory framework will facilitate joint or common procurement activities, including the use of systems contracts, realizing savings in both administrative costs and from suppliers, due to higher volume contracts.
2	*Working group on transportation and traffic operations*	
	The working group has been concentrating on the task of expanding the common travel agency contract covering the major United Nations organizations at Headquarters. It has also been coordinating the efforts by the various organizations to harmonize their web pages related to travel and transportation and to open up access to all pages to all users. Furthermore, it has been reviewing a uniform standard for requesting travel agency services worldwide that would enhance productivity of United Nations travel management and improve the administration of travel at offices away from Headquarters.	Programme delivery will be enhanced by these initiatives, which will lead to greater uniformity in travel procedures and reduction in administrative effort by eliminating duplication between participating organizations.

IV. Create an electronic United Nations and fully utilize information and automation systems

No.	Areas of efficiency measures	Impact on mandated programmes
1.	*Enhanced use of IMIS* Enhancement will involve the completion of the current project objectives of streamlining release 3 (Finance), development and introduction of release 4 (Payroll), and implementation of the complete system at major overseas offices by the end of 1999. The elimination of duplicate data entry and redundant data tables will lead to major productivity gains. Gains will also accrue from the automation of inter-office and inter-agency transactions.	Significant improvements in programme delivery should result from the timelier availability of management information and speedier transaction processing.
2.	*Use of specialized application software* There are many opportunities for the United Nations to develop specialized applications in-house or introduce off-the-shelf applications that will enable tasks to be carried out more efficiently. Examples include the Centrally Managed Software System, the Office of Human Resources Management databases that are complementary to IMIS and the Treasury Investment System. The new investment management application is being introduced by Treasury, and when utilized to facilitate cash-pooling will further improve yields on investments. Interfacing to IMIS will eliminate the manual entry of approximately 1,000 investment transactions each month. Redundant legacy systems will also be eliminated.	Specialized application software that relates to programmes will improve programme delivery. Administrative software will benefit programme delivery by making administrative processes more responsive.
3.	*Modernization of secretarial and clerical support functions* This will include the introduction of modern technology and methods, including an organization-wide standard for electronic mail (e-mail), meeting scheduling and office organization, as well as the introduction of electronic forms. Electronic forms will allow information to be entered and the forms forwarded to the actioning office, and also enable that data to be uploaded into systems such as IMIS. The forms can be placed on the Internet, extranet or intranet. Posts assigned to clerical support should be freed up for redeployment to other functions.	Programme delivery should be improved by enabling timelier transaction processing and production of outputs, making administrative information more readily available, and by making programme staff less reliant on clerical support staff.

No	Areas of efficiency measures	Impact on mandated programmes
4	*Continued modernization of the management of all types of documentation*	
	Modernizing the way the United Nations documentation, correspondence, reports, publications, and information are generated, processed, transferred, archived and accessed can eliminate most of the need to (a) generate paper copy; (b) physically transfer documents by messenger or other means; (c) maintain physical local filing systems; and (d) publish information in hard copy form. These efforts, started with the introduction of the Optical Disk System (ODS) and e-mail, will be continued with the Internet, the implementation of document management systems and the introduction of printing on demand technologies.	Greater and easier access to official documentation and programme-related information should improve programme delivery.

V. Establish further equitable reimbursement for services rendered to extrabudgetary activities, and cost recovery

No	Areas of efficiency measures	Impact on mandated programmes
1	*Reimbursement of services rendered to extrabudgetary entities and other agencies*	
	Legislative bodies have requested that regular budget funding should not be used to subsidize extrabudgetary activities. A systematic review of each cost-recovery arrangement needs to be undertaken with a view to establishing an equitable, uniform approach that avoids this situation. Many of the arrangements that are in force have evolved over a long period of time and may now be inappropriate.	Programme delivery should be enhanced through freeing up resources for redeployment.
2	*Optimizing cost recovery*	
	Costs charged to commercial activities need to be reviewed to ensure that no hidden subsidies to those activities are being made. Significant steps have already been taken in this regard with new arrangements for the management of the Gift Centre and catering services. Some of the other measures to be considered are charging for the use of United Nations-developed software and charging potential suppliers for bid submissions.	Programme delivery should be enhanced through freeing up resources for redeployment.

VI. Enhance conference services support

No.	Areas of efficiency measures	Impact on mandated programmes
1	*Interpretation*	
	The United Nations Office at Vienna has plans for pilot projects in remote interpretation to be carried out in 1998, with potentially the full acquisition and installation of an International Standardization Organization standard remote interpretation facility by 1999. This facility could be used to reduce significantly the cost of meetings at various duty stations, especially in Europe and Africa. Savings would accrue for the overall budget of the Organization. Headquarters and the United Nations Office at Geneva have been providing interpretation services for videoconferences on an ad hoc basis. Units in the Department for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and the Office for Common Support Services are jointly developing technical arrangements to ensure that the sound quality of videoconference links is up to the standards acquired for regular conference-room interpretation.	Programme delivery should be enhanced as a result of the improved quality of interpretation services.
2	*Verbatim reporting*	
	Off-site verbatim reporting, which will be implemented starting with the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, should make it possible to manage with fewer non-local temporary staff during the sessions of the Assembly. Savings may follow in the sound recording unit.	Programme delivery should be improved by having a more flexible set of skills within this service that can provide a quicker turnaround.
	Consideration is being given to the possibility of maximizing the use of staff in the Verbatim Reporting Service at Headquarters by combining their functions with those of other language staff.	
3	*Editing*	
	Following a thorough evaluation of priorities of outputs from the Editorial Service, some posts will be proposed for internal redeployment. Low priority tasks will be discontinued and duplicative official records will be eliminated.	Programme delivery should be facilitated by giving easier access to documentation through use of modern technology.

No.	Areas of efficiency measures	Impact on mandated programmes
4	*Translation*	
	Building upon the introduction of terminology databases, the linkage of translation staff to the optical disk system and the United Nations network, further potential areas for efficiency gains through the introduction of new technology are being explored. Voice recognition is being tested in the United Nations Office at Geneva to overcome the requirement of typing as a skill and to speed up text entry. A comparative study of translation memory technology systems is being undertaken with the intention of introducing the software by the third quarter 1998. This new technology will be particularly effective in the translation of repetitive material, which represents 10 to 15 per cent of total documentation. The expanded use of outsourcing and the use of off-site translation services should result in a reduction in the levels of temporary assistance required and a net cost saving.	There will be better programme delivery through improved consistency in translation and speedier and more responsive service through having a variety of places to turn to for translation services.
	In addition to the above areas, where initiatives are already under way, the impact of videoconferencing and other virtual approaches to meetings in reducing meetings costs, and the use of electronic publication to reduce the amount of documentation that needs to be distributed in hard copy have significant potential for major savings.	

Annex II

Areas for possible utilization of the Development Account

I. Assisting developing countries in the context of globalization and increasing interdependence

This goal derives from the overall thrust of the following:

Programmes subprogrammes	*Related objectives of the medium-term plan*
Programme 9 (Trade and development), particularly subprogramme 9.1 (Globalization and development)	Facilitate the process through which developing countries utilize the benefits of globalization to accelerate the attainment of the objective of sustainable development
Programme 13 (International drug control), particularly subprogramme 13.3 (Prevention and reduction of drug abuse, elimination of illicit crops and suppression of illicit drug trafficking)	Identify and disseminate best practice in the various aspects of demand reductions as well as on the design, planning and implementation of alternative development programmes; enable States to adopt adequate and timely strategies, policies and countermeasures against money laundering
Programme 14 (Economic and social development in Africa), particularly subprogramme 14.1 (Facilitating economic and social policy analysis)	Increase the capacity of Member States to take appropriate measures to respond to the emerging regional and global developments of significance to Africa's economic and social development
Programme 15 (Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific)	Provide the link between the global and country levels of economic and social development programmes
Programme 16 (Economic development in Europe)	Further the integration efforts of countries in transition into the European and global economies
Programme 17 (Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean), particularly subprogramme 17.1 (linkages with the global economy, competitiveness and production specialization)	Alert the countries of the region to the advantages and disadvantages that the international situation entails for their linkages with the global economy

II. Assisting in the understanding by the international community of emerging challenges and persistent problems in global development by better analysis and better networking of experts so as to promote an enhanced appreciation of global economic and social issues

Proposals in this area will complement activities under the following:

Programmes subprogrammes	*Related objectives of the medium-term plan*
Programme 9 (Trade and development), particularly subprogramme 9.1 (Globalization and development)	Examine specific development challenges regarding effective participation in international trade and investment, drawing out the lessons that may be of value to developing countries, countries in transition, and in particular the least developed countries
Programme 10 (Environment), particularly subprogramme 10.4 (Handling globalization and the environment)	Strengthen the environmental assessment of international economic policies, improving environmental macro and microeconomic analysis of the effectiveness and benefits/costs of environmental policies
Programme 13 (International drug control), particularly subprogramme 13.3 (Prevention and reduction of drug abuse, elimination of illicit crops and suppression of illicit drug trafficking)	Monitor and analyse information on illicit drug abuse and drug prevention worldwide; countering money-laundering

Programmes/subprogrammes	*Related objectives of the medium-term plan*
Programme 14 (Economic and social development in Africa), particularly subprogramme 14.1 (Facilitating economic and social policy analysis)	Increase the capacity of Member States to take appropriate measures to respond to the emerging regional and global developments of significance to Africa's economic and social development
Programme 14 (Economic and social development in Africa), particularly subprogramme 14.4 (Harnessing information for development)	Strengthen the capacity to organize and disseminate Africa's development information on the Internet, as well as making the resources of the Economic Commission for Africa library accessible to the African academic community, policy makers and research institutions through electronic connectivity
Programme 18 (Economic and social development in Western Asia), particularly subprogramme 18.3 (Economic development and global changes)	Expanding understanding of economic development with a view to enhancing macroeconomic management, international and interregional trade, finance, and domestic and foreign direct investment
Programme 28 (Economic and social affairs), particularly subprogramme 28.4 (Sustainable development)	Identifying new issues to be brought to the attention of the Commission on Sustainable Development for its consideration, including the assessment of new critical areas of sustainability
Programme 28 (Economic and social affairs), particularly subprogramme 28.7 (Global development trends, issues and policies)	Assisting Member States and intergovernmental bodies in the early identification of new and emerging issues in the world economy

III. Assisting developing countries in various aspects of the implementation of the global programmes and platforms of action, especially the follow-up to United Nations conferences

The follow-up to the following conferences are primarily undertaken through the programmes and subprogrammes indicated:

- *Agenda 21*: Programme 28 (Economic and social affairs), particularly subprogramme 28.4 (Sustainable development) and programme 10 (Environment), particularly subprogramme 10.4 (Handling globalization and the environment);
- *Fourth World Conference on Women*: Programme 28 (Economic and social affairs), particularly subprogramme 28.2 (Gender issues and advancement of women);
- *World Summit for Social Development*: Programme 28 (Economic and social affairs), particularly subprogramme 28.3 (Social policy and development);
- *Ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*: Programme 9 (Trade and development);
- *International Conference on Population and Development*: Programme 28 (Economic and social affairs), particularly subprogramme 28.6 (Population), in close cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund;
- *United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)*: Programme 11 (Human settlements).